May 9, 2012

The Honorable Dan Lungren
U.S. House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yvette Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
407 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Laura Richardson
U.S. House of Representatives
1330 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Lungren, Clarke, Bilirakis, and Richardson:

The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) applauds you for holding a joint subcommittee hearing today to explore public safety technology research and development.

TIA is a leading trade association for the information and communications technology industry, with over 500 member companies that manufacture or supply the products and services used in global communications. TIA appreciates the recent efforts in Congress to advance information & communications technology (ICT) research and development, including the establishment of a public safety wireless communications R&D program at NIST (Pub. L. No. 112-96 § 6303) and the recent passage of the Advancing America's Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Act (H.R. 3834) by the House of Representatives. ICT research has historically been underfunded at the federal level when compared to other industries, so TIA appreciates your leadership on this issue and stresses the necessity of targeted ICT research as a national priority.

"Homeland security" is a superset of several core constituencies with slightly different missions that often have common and interconnected technology and data requirements. Homeland security technologies can help protect public networks and other public infrastructure from both natural disasters and malicious attacks. A large amount of economic activity today depends on the continued availability of public broadband networks and infrastructure. Significant outages can significantly slow down national economic activity and can have other disastrous consequences.

In a recent white paper (enclosed), TIA identified several technical areas – **interoperability**, **security**, **survivability** and **encryption** – where additional research is needed to meet the needs of first responders. In the case of malicious attacks, the nature of the threat is constantly evolving as new worms and viruses are being invented. Continuing research and development is needed to prevent attacks before there is significant resulting damage.

Moreover, federally funded research specifically focused on **interoperable mobility** is necessary to support the emerging needs of the emergency services market.  Interoperable mobility enables public safety and law enforcement officials to use the various public safety and cellular mobile networks while avoiding the necessity of carrying multiple mobile devices.  It also promotes coordinated communications between various public service agencies and allows higher priority use of scarce spectrum resources for emergency use.  Bringing commercial technologies and emergency services technologies closer together will also result in lower costs and more advanced features for critical emergency services.

We urge you to ensure that federal research programs address these important areas, along with other areas identified in the enclosed white paper.  Once again, we applaud you for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,

Grant E. Seiffert
President